

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A keyboard enclosure for a keyboard comprising:

a first cavity in which a circuit can be disposed, the circuit including a first node and a second node both of which correspond to a key, wherein the circuit is operable to generate a signal when the key causes the first and second nodes to contact each other;

a region forming a second cavity in a lower enclosure for stiffening the lower enclosure and for providing a passage for one or more cables that couple the keyboard to a processor; and

a node support located in the second cavity and operable to provide physical support for the second node of the circuit to ensure contact between the first and second nodes is maintained when the circuit is disposed in the first cavity generates the signal.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The enclosure of claim 1 wherein the enclosure includes a single second cavity.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The enclosure of claim 1 wherein the second cavity has a substantial U-shape.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The enclosure of claim 1 wherein the second cavity has a substantial U-shape and extends substantially 15.5 inches.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The enclosure of claim 1 wherein the second cavity has a substantial U-shape, extends substantially 15.5 inches, and is substantially 0.5 inches deep.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The enclosure of claim 1 wherein the enclosure includes thirteen node supports, each disposed in the second cavity.

Claim 7 (original): The enclosure of claim 1 wherein the node support has a cylindrical shape.

Claim 8 (original): The enclosure of claim 7 wherein the node support is hollow.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The enclosure of claim 1 wherein the second cavity has a substantial U-shape and a bottom wall, and the node support extends from the bottom wall.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The enclosure of claim 1 wherein the node support includes an end located at an entrance of the second cavity.

Claim 11 (original): The enclosure of claim 1 wherein the enclosure includes a floor and a rib to maintain the position of the node support relative to the floor.

Claim 12 (original): The enclosure of claim 11 wherein the enclosure includes at least two ribs each operable to maintain the position of the node support relative to the floor.

Claim 13 (original): The enclosure of claim 12 wherein the enclosure includes at least two node supports, and one of the ribs extends between two node supports.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The enclosure of claim 11 wherein:
the second cavity has a substantial U-shape, a bottom wall, and a sidewall,
the node support extends from the bottom wall, and
the enclosure includes at least two ribs that extend between the node support and at least one side wall.

Claim 15 (currently amended): A keyboard comprising:
a plurality of keys, each movable relative to the other keys;
a switch membrane assembly including a plurality of circuits each having a first node and a second node both of which correspond to a respective one of the keys, wherein each circuit is operable to generate a signal when the key corresponding to the circuit's first and second nodes cause the first and second nodes to contact each other;
an upper enclosure to hold the keys; and

a lower enclosure to support the switch membrane assembly, the lower enclosure including:

a region forming a cavity ~~and operable to~~ for stiffening the lower enclosure ~~and for providing a passage for one or more cables that couple the keyboard to a processor~~, and

a node support located in the cavity and operable to provide physical support ~~for~~ one or more of the nodes of the switch membrane assembly ~~to ensure contact between the first and second nodes is maintained when the circuit generates the signal~~.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The keyboard of claim 15 wherein the lower enclosure includes thirteen node supports, each operable to support a respective one of the nodes of the switch membrane assembly.

Claim 17 (original): The keyboard of claim 15 wherein: the lower enclosure includes two legs operable to support a portion of the lower enclosure above a surface, and the region extends between the two legs.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The keyboard of claim 15 wherein the lower enclosure includes a rib operable to maintain the position of the node support relative to the one or more nodes of the switch membrane assembly.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A computer system comprising:
computer circuitry for performing computer functions; and
a keyboard operable to provide data to the circuitry and including:
a plurality of keys, each movable relative to the other keys,
a switch membrane assembly including a plurality of circuits each having a first node and a second node both of which correspond to a respective one of the keys, wherein each circuit is operable to generate a signal when the key corresponding to the circuit's first and second nodes causes the first and second nodes to contact each other,
an upper enclosure to hold the keys, and
a lower enclosure to support the switch membrane assembly, the lower enclosure including:

a region forming a cavity for stiffening the lower enclosure and providing a passage for one or more cables that couple the keyboard to a processor, and

a node support located in the cavity and operable to provide physical support for one or more of the nodes of the switch membrane assembly to ensure contact between the first and second nodes is maintained when the circuit generates the signal.

Claim 20 (currently amended): A method for supporting a switch membrane assembly of a keyboard, comprising:

forming a first cavity in an enclosure of a keyboard and in which a circuit can be disposed, the circuit including a first node and a second node both of which correspond to a key, wherein the circuit is operable to generate a signal when the key causes the first and second nodes to contact each other;

forming a second cavity in a region of the a lower enclosure to for stiffening the lower enclosure and for providing a passage for one or more cables that couple the keyboard to a processor;

locating a node support in the second cavity to provide physical support for the second node to ensure contact between the first and second nodes is maintained when the circuit generates the signal.

Claim 21 (previously presented): The method of claim 20 further comprising locating a rib in the second cavity to maintain the position of the node support relative to a floor of the enclosure.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The method of claim 21 wherein locating the rib includes extending the rib between the node support and a wall of the second cavity.

Claim 23 (original): The method of claim 21 wherein locating the rib includes extending the rib between two node supports.

Claim 24 (currently amended): A method for generating a signal, the method comprising:

moving a key of a keyboard to move a top node of a switch membrane assembly toward a corresponding bottom node of the assembly, wherein the top and bottom nodes are disposed in a first cavity of the keyboard;

contacting the bottom node with the top node support to generate a signal; and
physically supporting the bottom node with a node support when the top node contacts the bottom node to ensure contact between the top and bottom nodes is maintained when the signal is generated, wherein the node support is located in a second cavity of the keyboard, wherein the second cavity is located in a lower enclosure for stiffening the lower enclosure and for providing a passage for one or more cables that couple the keyboard to a processor, and.

Claim 25 (original): The method of claim 24 wherein moving the key of the keyboard includes pushing the key toward the top node.

Claim 26 (new): The enclosure of claim 1, wherein the node support eliminates a need for a metal plate to provide the keyboard a desired stiffness during use.